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Postmaster-General at Washington to instruct our American delegates to vote in favor of it.

This the Academy has done, but other American scientific bodies should join in the work, adopt similar resolutions and send them to our Postmaster-General that he may know that the students of natural history in the United States eagerly desire such a reduction in postage rates. The next International Postal Congress meets at Washington on the fifth of May next. We hope that all those who are acquainted with the facts will use such means and influence as may be at their command to help in the accomplishment of this end.

For the guidance of those who will aid in the manner suggested, a translation of the original French text of the amendment referred to is as follows :

"Amendment to Article XIX (samples) 4, of the Regulations of Details and Order.

"5. Objects of natural history, dried or preserved animals and plants, geological specimens, etc., of which the transmission has no commercial interest, and the packing of which conforms to the general conditions concerning packages of samples of merchandise."

If this amendment be adopted by the Postal Congress, specimens of Natural History can be sent to countries of the Universal Postal Union at the rate of one cent for every four ounces.

The directorship of the U. S. National Museum has been acceptably filled by the appointment of Dr. C. D. Walcott director of the U. S. Geologic Survey, but the appointment is said to be a temporary one. Mr. Richard Rathbun has been appointed Assistant Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. Mr. Rathbun has especial qualifications for the directorship of the U. S. Fish Commission and it is to be hoped that President McKinley will make him his appointee.

RECENT LITERATURE.

Sudworth's Nomenclature of the Arborescent Flora of the United States.¹—If it were necessary to prove the increase in

¹ Nomenclature of the Arborescent Flora of the United States, by George B. Sudworth, Dendrologist of the Division of Forestry. Prepared under the direction of B. E. Fernow, Chief of the Division of Forestry. [Bulletin No. 14, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry]. Washington, Government Printing Office, 1897. Issued January 21, 1897, 8vo, pp. VIII+319.

the scientific nature of the work done in the United States Department of Agriculture one would have to do no more than compare the book before us with the publications from the same division a few years ago. It is a source of much gratification to American botanists that the botanical publications made by the general government are of the highest character, ranking equal to if not above similar publications from any other country.

Mr. Fernow himself writes the introduction, in which he makes some very pertinent remarks concerning the matter of botanical nomenclature, indicating very clearly the position which he occupies in the nomenclature controversy. He states the matter very concisely as follows: "The essential basis upon which the revision has been made is the so-called 'law of priority,' i. e., for species and varieties the specific or varietal name has been taken up which was first used by the author who first described the plant, and for genera the first established generic name either alone or in combination with a type specific name. In order to avoid obscurity and uncertainty, the publication in which for the first time the binominal nomenclature was used persistently, namely, Linnaeus's *Species Plantarum* (first edition, 1753) has been made the starting point, in accordance with an expression of the botanists of the Botanical Club of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Objections have been made to the injustice committed in ignoring earlier names; the objectors overlook that it is not a matter of justice primarily, but of expediency, which leads to the adoption of the law of priority, and it would be inexpedient to go back to an earlier date than the one which firmly establishes our present system of notation."

An examination of Mr. Sudworth's work shows that he has done it with much thoroughness. The citations are very full, and the excellent plan is followed throughout of appending to each citation its date. After a full citation of synonyms the various common names used in different parts of the country are given. This at once shows that what every botanist has believed is true as to the unreliability of such names. Thus we find that the Balsam Fir (*Abies balsamea*) bears the following names: Balsam Fir, Balsam, Canada Balsam, Balm of Gilead, Balm of Gilead Fir, Blister Pine, Fir Pine, Fir Tree, Single Spruce, Silon Pine, and Sapin. The Plane Tree (*Platanus occidentalis*) is known as Sycamore, Buttonwood, Buttonball Tree, Buttonball, Plane Tree and Water Beech.

The following examples will show how the species are treated, and will convince everyone of the great usefulness of the work.

Catalpa catalpa (Linn.) Karsten.

Common *Catalpa*.

SYN.—*Bignonia catalpa* Linnæus, Sp. Pl., Ed. 1, II, 622 (1753).

Catalpa bignonioides Walter, Fl. Caroliniana, 64 (1788).

Catalpa cordifolia Moench. Meth., 464, (1794).

Catalpa ternifolia Cavenelles, Desc. Pl., 26, (1802).

Catalpa syringaefolia Sims, in Bot. Mag., XXVII, t. 1094, (1808).

Catalpa communis Du Mont de Courset, Bot. Cult., Ed. 2, III, 242, (1811).

Catalpa catalpa Karsten, Deutsch. Fl., 927 (1882).

COMMON NAMES.

Catalpa (Mass., R. I., Conn., N. Y., N. J., Pa., Del., W. Va., N. C., S. C., Ala., Ga., Fla., Miss., La., Ark., Ky., Mo., Ill., Kans., Nebr., Iowa, Mich., Wis., Ohio, Minn.).

Indian Bean (Mass., R. I., N. Y., N. J., Pa., N. C., Ill.).

Beantree (N. J., Del., Pa., Va., La., Nebr.).

Catawba (W. Va., Ala., Fla., Kans.).

Cigartree (R. I., N. J., Pa., W. Va., Mo., Ill., Wis., Iowa).

Catawba-tree (Del.).

Indian Cigartree (Pa.).

Smoking Bean (R. I.).

It remains for me to commend the typography and the uniform de-capitalization of specific names. It is a thoroughly good, modern piece of work.—CHARLES E. BESSEY.

Atlas und Grundriss der Bakteriologie und Lehrbuch der speciellen bakteriologischen Diagnostik. Von Prof. Dr. K. B. Lehmann und Dr. R. Neumann. Teil I, Atlas. Teil II, Text. Verlag von J. F. Lehmann, München, 1896.

This is a general work on bacteriology covering much the same ground as Flügge's *Die Mikroorganismen*, but in a very different manner. About 60 of the more common animal pathogenic and saprophytic forms have been studied more or less carefully and re-described according to a pre-established scheme, so that their behavior on all the common media may be readily compared. Many other species are briefly mentioned. These 60 species are figured in the Atlas, and Dr. Neumann, the artist, has been peculiarly happy in some of his representations, if not in all. Streak and stab cultures are given in their natural tints, usually on a black background, the agar or gelatin being represented as absent or black. The Atlas contains 63 colored plates, including more than 600 separate figures, most of which are original.